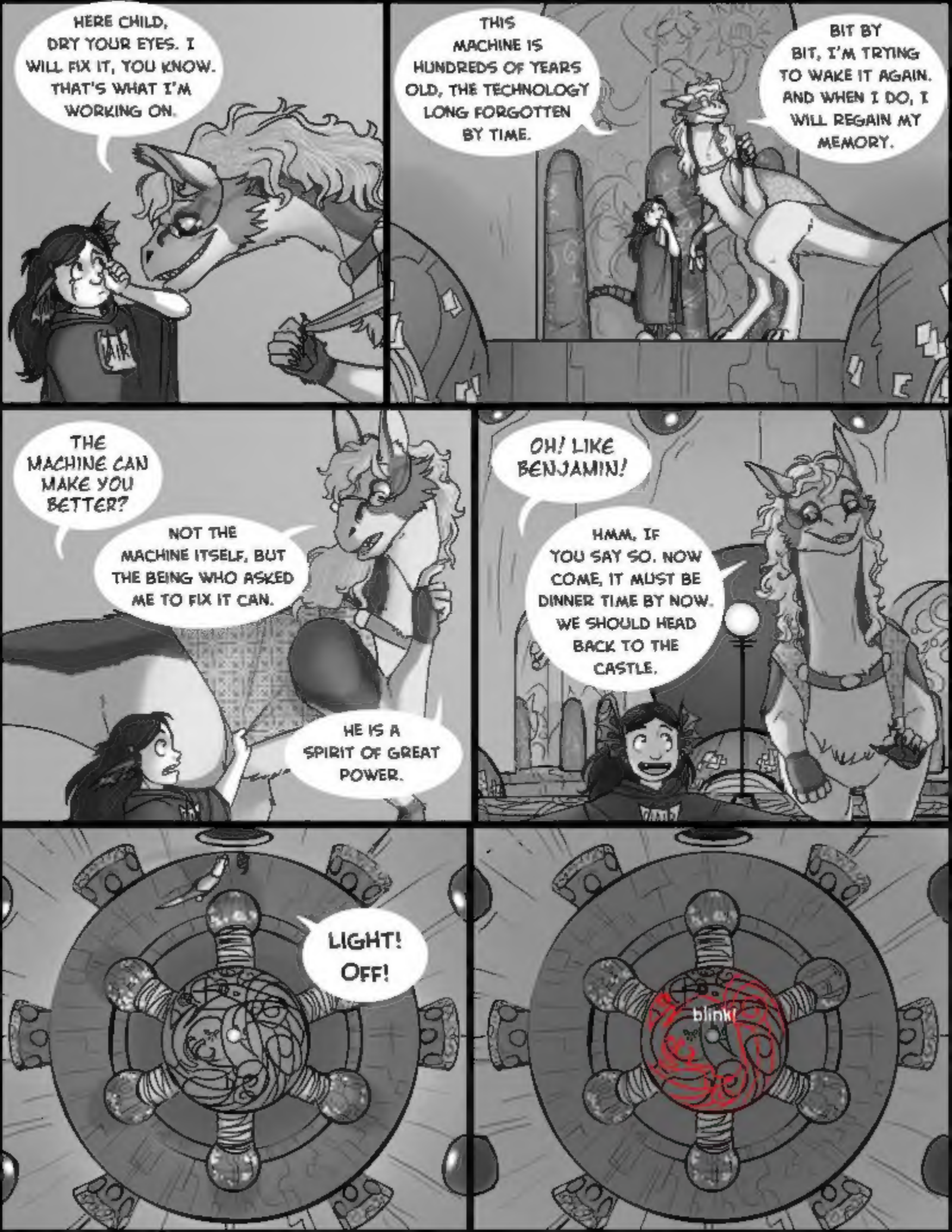
HERE CHILD, DRY YOUR EYES. I WILL FIX IT, YOU KNOW. THAT'S WHAT I'M WORKING ON.
THIS MACHINE IS HUNDREDS OF YEARS OLD, THE TECHNOLOGY LONG FORGOTTEN BY TIME.
BIT BY BIT, I'M TRYING TO WAKE IT AGAIN. AND WHEN I DO, I WILL REGAIN MY MEMORY.
THE MACHINE CAN MAKE YOU BETTER?
NOT THE MACHINE ITSELF, BUT THE BEING WHO ASKED ME TO FIX IT CAN.
HE IS A SPIRIT OF GREAT POWER.
OH! LIKE BENJAMIN!
HMM. IF YOU SAY SO. NOW COME, IT MUST BE DINNER TIME BY NOW. WE SHOULD HEAD BACK TO THE CASTLE.
LIGHT! OFF!
blink!

...and bless our friends and family who are far away from us. Amen.
LET'S EAT!
DAFFY, AS ALWAYS, YOU'VE MADE A SUPERB DINNER, BUT I ASKED FOR COFFEE, NOT TEA.
NO MA'AM, YOU ASKED FOR TEA. YOU ALWAYS HAVE TEA.
I THINK I KNOW WHAT I WANT DAFFY, AND WHAT I WANT IS COFFEE.
BUT MISS HOLLY, YOU NEVER HAVE COFFEE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I HAVE COFFEE ALL THE TIME! AND WHAT I ASKED FOR IS COFFEE.
BUT MISS HOLLY, YOU NEVER HAVE COFFEE.
Don't hurt yourself Daffy, I'll get her drink.
WELL... ANYWAY, I'M BEGINNING TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS ON MY PROJECT, AT LAST.
IT SOUNDS INTERESTING. I WISH YOU'D TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
Hey guys, wait a minute... the table's only set for seven.
Where's Tulip Cane? And Ferret Sky?
And why do you guys suddenly look so guilty?

WE FOUND THEIR ROOMS EMPTY THIS MORNING, EXCEPT FOR A NOTE. THEY'RE GOING TO LIVE IN SOLTON.
THEY'VE LEFT US. JUST LIKE THE OTHERS.
SIGH
THUMP
IT'LL BE OKAY CASSIE. WE'LL FIND SOME WAY TO MAKE DO.
Make do? Spoons, we're trying to maintain a whole castle with seven people! Two of whom are underage!
I thought at least Sky wouldn't leave. He said he'd stay as long as he could.
I guess he decided that it had been long enough.
We're sorry we didn't tell you earlier. We didn't want you to be upset with us.
Oh Azalea, how could I be upset with any of you? You've stayed! You've remained loyal to our master.
Sure, but for how long?
Everyone will leave eventually.
Just like Anthony.

What's wrong with you, Spindle? What would Anthony think if he heard you say that?
Well, why don't we just ask him? Oh, that's right, he's not here!
I'm sick of everyone talking like he could walk through the door at any moment. He's not coming back. Ferret saw that. They all saw it. That's why they left.
SHAAAA
PLEASE SPINDLE, YOU'RE LEAKING MAGIC LIKE AN INFANT. CONTROL YOURSELF.
YOU'RE WRONG, SPINDLE! ANTHONY LOVED US, HE'S GOING TO COME BACK AND FIX EVERY-THING!
It's been three years since we've even seen him! He stopped sending money months ago!
LETTERS GET LOST. SO DO PEOPLE FOR THAT MATTER. IT'S OUR JOB TO CARE FOR WHAT WAS PRECIOUS TO ANTHONY UNTIL HE COMES BACK.
And what if he does come back? Do you want to go back to the way it was, watching him sit and stare at the wall, letting the castle rot around him out of a broken heart?
He was getting better, Spindle. He joined the navy to earn money for us. If the money hasn't come there must be a good reason for it. You talk as if you don't want him to come back.
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
WELL MAYBE I DON'T!

pant
pant
pant
Here! Have your stupid drink. I'm going outside.
BUT YOU HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING!
I'm not hungry!
Seeing this much denial in one place makes me lose my appetite.
What just happened? I've never seen Spindle lose it like that before.
WE'VE NEVER GONE SO LONG WIHOUT WORD FROM THE MASTER BEFORE. WE'RE ALL UPSET.
FOR WHATEVER REASON, OUR MASTER IS MISSING, AND IT'S LEFT A HOLE IN THE LIVES OF EVERYONE IN THE CASTLE.
WE JUST HAVE DIFFERENT WAYS OF DEALING WITH THAT HURT.
SPUH! WHAT IS THIS... COFFEE? SPINDLE KNOWS I NEVER DRINK COFFEE!

DRIP
DRIP
CHOMP!
Huh. Would you look at that.
The nasty, blood-sucking insects are really big this Spring.
GRRRRR!

HELP! THE BIG, STUPID BUTT'S GOING TO EAT ME!
You're the one who bit me, you little twerp!
YOU SAID MEAN THINGS ABOUT MY DADDY!
What do you care? You don't even remember him!
YOU MADE CASSIE SAD! THAT'S ALL YOU DO, YOU JUST MAKE EVERYTHING WORSE!
I HATE YOU! I WISH YOU HAD LEFT INSTEAD OF FERRET AND THE OTHERS!
Anything to get away from your screeching!
DON'T BOTHER WRITING ANY STUPID LETTERS, 'CAUSE I WON'T READ THEM!
Why would I write to a selfish, little squirt like you?!
AT LEAST I'M NOT A STINKY, FAT TEENAGER LIKE YOU!
It's better than being a wailing, useless brat!
slip!
SPLASH!
CLAIR!

PLUNGE!
BLIP
BLOOP
SWSH
BLOOP
SWRSH
FLOOSH!

SPLAT!
Clair! Are you all right?!
KZZK
HUFF
HUFF
ZDD
THERE'S A SECRET TUNNEL IN OUR WELL! IT GOES DOWN FOREVER! MAYBE THERE'S TREASURE OR MONSTERS AT THE BOTTOM!
Well, at least you won't mess around near the well anymore, right?
KRZP!
CONCEIL!
ARE YOU KIDDING?! I CAN'T WAIT TO DO IT AGAIN!
Again? AGAIN?! Why you little- come here!
AAIEEE! SLOBBER ATTACK!
STOP IT SPINDLE, THAT TICKLES! I'M FINE, IT'S OKAY!
What, you thought I was worried about you?!
I was just afraid your filthy, old boots would poison the well!
STINKY TEENAGER.
Thtupid bwat.

Thinking nothing of it, he went to his bed and fell asleep.
But then, he woke in the middle of the night.
A strange, yet familiar, song was coming from the parlor.
So he got out of bed and followed the peculiar music until he reached the old piano.
What he saw there turned his hair white with terror, for though she had been dead fifteen years...
She was there, playing her favorite song with her white, shriveled fingers!
THIS STORY IS TOO SCARY FOR BENJAMIN.
Well, if you're scared I suppose we could stop.
I'M NOT SCARED! I SAID IT WAS TOO SCARY FOR BENJAMIN, NOT ME!
Either way, I think you'd better leave the bedtime stories to me, Spindle.